Linguistic Strategies in Post-Apartheid Fiction

by

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Abstract

In postcolonial literary scholarship, not only is language generally seen as a signifier of culture and identity, it is also conceived as a tool for inscribing alienation, cultural difference, cultural distance and so on. This is why the idea of using a particular language, often the imperial one, in forging national unity in the post-colony has become the order of the day. Contradicting this position, this paper examines the linguistic strategies deployed in four post-apartheid works of fiction in order to demonstrate their metonymic significance in engendering national and cultural integrations in post-apartheid South Africa. It identifies code-mixing, code-switching, un-translated words and glossing as major linguistic strategies used in the selected works as textual and creative contribution to national integration in post-apartheid South Africa.

Keywords: Code-mixing, Code-switching, Glossing, Post-apartheid South Africa, Un-translated words

Introduction

The power and overarching influence of language in literature has been underscored by structuralist and postmodernist conception of language as a shaper of what we think; and that there can be no thought without language. According to Ann Jefferson (1982:88), structuralists believe that not only does language organization precede message or reality - and by implication literature - messages or realities are products constructed by language system. They insist that if literature has any content at all, language is it. Although our interpretation of data in this paper is not essentially from structuralists' perspective, their view that language organization precedes any message is briefly explored as metonymic of a tentative valuation of the emerging linguistic configuration in South African post-apartheid literary imaginary.

Commenting on the controversy about the place of different languages in post-apartheid South Africa, Ngidi (2006:5) observes 'a renewed interest in the debate'. In the introductory note to his interview with Ntongela Masilela, a South African scholar of English and World Literature, Ngidi commends Masilela's attention to the role of literature in encouraging linguistic and cultural independence.

He further supports his position by paraphrasing a view expressed by Lewis Nkosi at the inaugural Cape Town Book Fair in 2006 to the effect that literature, an aspect of culture, is, in the final analysis, about the power of representation. To be certain, this is incontrovertible because literary expressions are not only executed through language, they simultaneously signify a linguistic code. Ngidi seems to be of the opinion that there is injustice in the linguistic space made available to indigenous languages in the apartheid years. He therefore argues for the translation of writings in indigenous languages, as done for Afrikaans during apartheid years as 'an act of justice, reconciliation and literary repositioning' (7). While Ngidi's position and advocacy are both legitimate and realistic, they are also patently political. They resonate as language planners' push for policy action. While his arguments actually speak for professional or political language planning, it is coincidental and interesting to note that creative writers of the new era also appear to be making their own push through what, in the South African context, can be regarded as linguistic experimentations. This paper attempts a tentative evaluation of this tendency.

Language Controversy in African Literature

In the early years of critical interrogation of modern African literature, one of the most controversial issues was the language issue. At the forefront of the debate, on one hand, were critics like Obi Wali (1963) and Ngugi wa Thiongo (1994) who espoused the use of African languages as the authentic and best medium to express African literature. On the other hand were some critics, led by Achebe (1963), who thought differently. This latter group were of the view that both African and foreign languages can be used to express African literature. While the debate between the two divides seems to have petered out, the issue still raises its 'strong' head from time to time. For instance, not quite long ago, Pius Adesanmi (2002) speaks in support of the *Achebean* position that African writers can continue to use European languages in creative ways, and that this would not necessarily amount to promoting linguistic imperialism. In fact, he readily endorses what appears to him to be Nigerian writers' linguistic genius in handling the English language to project the African experience. Here is the way he describes it:

> My generation writes predominantly in English, Nigerian English, and shall continue to do so in the foreseeable future. That does not in any way make us Europhiliacs or agents of imperialism. The Igbo genius is unmistakable in Oguibe's poetry as the Yoruba genius is in the poetry of Adewale and Raji. (126)

Because each of the positions has its own merits and demerits, their enduring pertinence in the study of African literature cannot be overemphasized. In fact, the controversy inscribes the centrality of language to literary and cultural practice. It also indirectly comments on the issue of identity, unquestionably signified by language, which has come to dominate discourses in postcolonial studies. Some of these discourses include issues of linguistic alienation, marginalization, expatriation, translation, transliteration, and so on. For instance, in his study of linguistic expatriation in modern African drama, Fashina (1992:7) identifies the challenge of 'psychological "distance"' between the African indigenous cultural ideas, tones, rhythm and sensibilities on the one hand, and the foreign linguistic medium on the other. He describes this as issues of alienation and identity crisis. He goes further to argue that 'the African cultural dramatic tradition cannot be effective and successfully harmonized with a foreign linguistic medium to produce a dramaturgy that is truly and purely African'. As evident in his phraseology, Fashina can easily be identified with the school of cultural purism and linguistic decolonization project in Africa. His dismissal of Ajeigbe's (1983) suggestion that the imagination be stretched as a coping strategy in instances of psycho-linguistic alienation for the audience of Africa drama presented in a foreign language as simplistic is not totally acceptable. In fact, his suggestion that African writers and intellectuals should have their writings in foreign languages translated into African indigenous languages begs the issue. The only advantage in this, as later admitted by Fashina himself, is that such as an arrangement will encounter minimal linguistic challenge due to a supposed cultural contiguity among Africans. Indeed, the theory of linguistic contiguity may not even hold in many cases. Although Fashina gloss over areas on the issue of language in African literature, our reference to his objection and concession is intended to underscore the problematics of the language issue in African creative writing.

In contrast to the general perception by people, Tollefson (1991:2) demonstrates an acute awareness of the significance of language when he notes that it is 'built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural' Indeed, the significance of language in the existential conditioning and experiences of man and, especially in literature, has been extensively remarked upon. Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2013:284) credits another scholar, Archibald Hill, with describing language as 'the primary and most highly elaborated form of human symbolic activity'. This is also corroborated by Halliday and Martin (1993:10) when they note that 'The history of humanity is not only a history of socio-economic activity. It is also a history of semiotic activity;' the semiotic activity which, of course, includes language. These views underscore the importance of language in human undertakings, and bring us to the symbolism and metaphorical import of language in post-apartheid fiction, especially in its capacity to encourage, facilitate or impose change.

Language in Postcolonial Studies and Post-Apartheid Era

As a signifier of identity and instrument of hegemonic pursuit or imperial subjugation, language is very central to colonial discourses and cardinal in postcolonial cultural disquisitions. Leading postcolonial scholars and theorists such as Edward Said, Homi Bhaba, Gayatri Spivak, Bill Ashcroftt, Helen Tiffen, and Gareth Griffith have drawn attention to the centrality of language to the contest between the cultures of the centre and the margin. This notion of centrality is well-articulated by Moore-Gilbert et al. when they note that language is crucial 'not simply at the level of a national language, but in terms of idiom, since many of the arguments within postcolonial theory turn exactly on how critics should turn on their subject'(1997:4). It may well be noted that how critics 'turn on their subject' is often a function of how writers present their subject, which is, again, essentially through the instrumentality of language. In addition to the idea of syncretism and hybridism, Ashcroft et al. (1989) also identify a number of other linguistic features of postcolonial writing in *The Empire Writes Back*. In this paper, we draw handsomely from their theoretical postulations.

In pre-multiracial democratic South Africa, the colonial as well Calvinist ideology of racial superiority, no doubt, strongly influenced the country's *langue* and *parole*, to borrow Saussure's terms, in terms of language choice and literary expression. This invariably marginalized the ethnic languages of the Black majority while privileging English and Afrikaans. Besides the factors of colonial subjugation and imperialism, globalization has also been implicated in the tendency to marginalize some languages at the expense of others. According to Alexander Neville, these factors 'have established a hierarchy of standard languages, which mirrors the power relations on the planet… and hasten the extinction of innumerable language varieties' (2003: 5). This is the case with most languages of the third world, including South Africa. However, like in most other African countries which had come under one imperial power or the other, Black South African writers must have embraced English not necessarily because of its privileged status as language of the Master, but mainly because it offers wider readership opportunity for their works. Still, the domestication of the English language in form of abrogation, variance or syncretism, which is easily discernible in the works of other sub-Saharan African writers up north, though present, is quite negligible in the literature of different racial groups during apartheid in South Africa.

The importance attached to language in South Africa, especially as a symbol of cultural pride and identity is writ large in the socio-political history of the sub-continent. Afrikaans was invented by Dutch settlers as a means of group identity. Since the invention and adoption of the language, it has been passionately promoted. One of Afrikaners' strategies of promoting their language was to discourage members of the *volk* from using English, another imperial code in the country. At a point in the history of apartheid, the Calvinist authorities approved the use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in black schools, which was violently resisted and led to the death of many Black school children in the notorious Soweto Riots of 1976.

The passion with which the imposition of the language was pursued and simultaneously resisted demonstrates how strongly the people concerned felt about their language. South African Blacks saw Afrikaans as a language of the oppressor and therefore resisted it, even at the cost of their lives. In spite of the overwhelming use and clout of the English language in South Africa and around the world, Afrikaners resisted its encroachment into their *volk* world. Similarly, blacks kept Afrikaans at arm's length. The result was an extension of racial compartmentalization from socio-economic and political arenas to the cultural space symbolized by language. Interestingly and unsurprisingly, writings of the post-apartheid era are steadily undermining this cultural reality, projecting in the process what may be described as a symbol of unity in diversity in all areas of life by South Africans. There seems to be emerging a kind of linguistic configuration built around hybridity or multiple lingos in the new fiction.

While this tendency is not absolutely new in South African writing, it is worthy of special note that this and other linguistic resources to be enjoying exploitation by writers in order to engender new functions and implications. In fact, some scholars (Finlayson and Madiba, 2002; Skutnabb-Kungas, 2000; Alexander, 2002 and 2003) have commented strongly on the need to recognize and embrace linguistic diversity in formal and intellectual undertakings. Alexander articulates this most forcefully when he submits:

> Suffice it to say that the proposition that cultural and, therefore, linguistic diversity is as necessary as biodiversity for the survival and perpetuation of the human species is one with which we have to engage (2003: 7)

This paper intends to demonstrate the inclination of some post-apartheid fictional works towards the realization of this vision, as well as draw attention to its postcolonial significance.

National Integration: Linguistic Strategies?

One quality that is increasingly becoming characteristic of the new South African fiction relates to language. As a multiracial and multilingual society, it would not be surprising if the literature of the country is characterized by its polyglossic features. This is so in a rather marginal and subtle way with respect to very few creative writings of the apartheid years, as most both Black and White writings of the period are more preoccupied with the treatment of race and racial issues. In the post-apartheid era, South African writings are slowly but seriously offering cross-cultural texts, texts that fully place the country in post-liberation and post-colonial reality. Before the transition to multiracial democracy in 1994, the post-colonial status of South Africa had been controversial.

According to Gallagher (1997), this is because, though an independent state, the majority Black and Colored populations were still under subjugation until 1994. Technically and politically speaking, therefore, only the White population was not under colonial hegemony. Consequently, she sees 1994 as heralding South African post-coloniality in the political sense. Although Ashcroft et al. (1989:2) have used the term postcolonial 'to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present', in this paper we adopt Gallagher's position on the post-colonial status of South Africa because current writings from the country have only truly begun to show contiguity with postcolonial literatures of other parts of the world in terms of linguistic features. Steadily and widely trending in the emergent fiction are features such as code-switching, un-translated words, glossing, syntactic fusion and linguistic abrogation across racial divides.

In the South African polyglossic literary space, the imperial languages of the center, Afrikaans and English, are being appropriated by the margin and vice versa, in more rigorous, exciting and suggestive ways. I like to start with un-translated words category. In Barbara Adair's *End*, for instance, the novelist does not only allude to a popular song of the struggle days, she transfers and imposes it on her English text in its Xhosa rendition, viz.:

> *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika. Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo, Yizwa imithandazo yethu, Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho Lwayo. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso, O fedise dintwa la Matshwenyeho, O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso, Setjhaba sa South Afrika-South Afrika…. (End,* 92)

Coming from a white writer, ordinarily, this rendition can be seen as inscribing elements of cultural distance and difference between the worlds of the English-speaking white writer and the Black native she writes about in the given context since the lyrical text is taken from a non-English culture. However, while the lyric is taken up by other Black characters present at the scene of rendition in a mood of solidarity with the Black musician and piano player, some of the white characters who do not know the words to the song connect so emotionally with it that their eyes get filled with a tear or two. This suggests that contrary to the idea of cultural distance which the Xhosa text may ordinarily bear in the novel, it is actually implicated in an agendum of solidarity. Thus, there emerges a clear subversion, as a text of difference becomes one of unity here. In few of the white writings of apartheid years where this feature is present, it is often clearly meant for the purpose of distancing or willful alienation, if not derogatory use. Earlier in the same scene, Adair has punctuated her narration with the following song in Afrikaans:

Uit die blou van onse hemel, uit die diepte van ons see. Oor ons ewige gebergtes, waar die kranse antwoord gee… (91).

The song, by a nameless military or security officer, is sung in the presence of other comrades he had requested to stand up to join his convivial mood at a drinking session. While the comrades oblige the officer by standing up, he is the only one who does the singing. From the meaning of his lyrics, the officer gives expression not only to his Afrikaner nationalism but also to his devotion to his beautiful country, South Africa. The non-participation in the singing by the comrades, as we have in the case of the Xhosa song of the struggle years invoked in the previous example, is of crucial import. As the comrades are also whites, their non-participation may be borne out of a lack of knowledge of the song or a diplomatic sensitivity to the reality of their new multiracial democratic milieu. The latter appears more plausible for the comrades neither exhibit any form of emotional involvement seen in other black and white listeners to the Xhosa song, *Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika.*. Consequently, the idea of Calvinist superiority or Afrikaner nationalism is subtly repudiated by fellow whites. Taken together, these two instances of un-translated texts, rather than foster a legacy of cultural difference and alienation with which this strategy is usually identified in postcolonial studies may well signify a drive towards cultural and, by implication, racial rapprochement in post-apartheid South Africa.

In W.P.B. Botha's *A Duty of Memory,* the exploration of new linguistic strategies is quite pronounced. Botha is one of the few Afrikaners who write primarily in the English language. In this third novel of his, language is made to foreground cultural difference. However, quite unlike it used to be, which is between blacks and whites, the difference is between the two white language groups in South Africa. There are several examples of un-translated words from Afrikaans in this novel of English expression; some of which include *broers, dood, dronklap, lekker, neek, skander, skelim, skollies, takkies* and so on. The deliberate use of these words in a novel of English expression may be due to one, some, or all of these reasons: translation problem, cultural difference or unity advocacy. The way the novelist provides the meanings of the words in a glossary list at the end of the work undermines the first possibility. Most of the words are provided one-word equivalent translations, viz.: *broers*-brother, *dood*-dead, *lekker*-nice, *neek*-beat up, *skander*-shame, *skelim*-rogue, and so on. That this may result from or signify cultural difference would be unconvincing because the characters in interlocution and to whom they are attributed are of the same ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the words are not used with either a derogatory or condescending import by a member of one ethno-cultural group against another. Consequently, one is persuaded to the use of the words as the novelist strategy to advocate unity in the linguistically diverse world of South African literature and nation.

There are also numerous instances of code-mixing and code-switching in Botha's novel, as seen in the following: 'After all we were both of us *plaasjaapie* with no business living in Pretoria,'(19); 'he's the one who is *braaing* down there by the bronzed ox-wagons of Blood River' (45); 'Then I used to remember what Pa had told Lettie to tell Lucas: *Se net vir Lucas as hy drink, drink hy in sy eie tyd'* (16); 'Lettie asked what she must do with the half-jack. But Pa he answered, *Se net vir…*' (5). Another vital example is also noted when a policeman, Sergeant Muller, tries to converse with Jo, the protagonist's sister who recently returned from London. On the occasion, he starts, '*Nee, nee, mevrou, die wind is te…* Ag, now, I'm sorry. I must remember to speaking English' (89). The list is long. These language features, especially those of un-translated words, draw attention to cultural experiences which may be deemed peculiar and probably irreproducible in another language. While this is not the case here, the tension of such language difference is unmistakable, as especially observable in Sergeant Muller's attempt at interlocution with Jo. Again, while these expressions are, ordinarily, iconic of cultural difference and distance, a closer look at the last example excites a new perspective because the policeman and Jo share the same linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.

Further instances of language use in the novel, which often characterizes post-colonial writings, include glossing and syntactic fusion. While glossing refers to parenthetical translations, syntactic fusion implies a combination of linguistic structures of different languages. Meshing the linguistic structures of English and Afrikaans, Botha combines nominals and their pronominals as subject in the following examples: 'But *Pa he* assured', (5); 'Gessie and me we had no worries on that score' (20), 'Mafimane he didn't understand' (139) and 'Some bloke he expresses condolences to your wife' (155). Again, this draws attention to the appropriation of English to convey the mind of an Afrikaner. As for glossing, few of the examples are found in the following contexts. While recalling the exploits of South Africa's great Rugby team, Eeben picks a hole in the claim of South African motto. "You see our country's motto may be 'eendrag maak mag' – unity is strength – but really we are many teams, not one" (47). Again, recalling how his father used to subject members of the household to severe beatings, Eeben notes: 'When I fetched Mafimane it turned out Pa wanted to show me how to *vat so 'n byt* – take a bite – out of a person's ear with a sjambok" (95). In his cynical vision of life, he notes that one day one would die and all that friends, family and neighbours would offer is 'A few tears and it's *totsiens my vriend* – so long ol' pal – followed by a quick dop on the way home', (155). Again, these features signify the cross-cultural context of Botha's fiction in postcolonial South Africa, postcolonial in both political and cultural senses. As an Afrikaner whose mastery and use of the English language is eloquent, the motivation for Botha's commingling and yoking of the lexis and syntax of Afrikaans and English certainly has to be looked into beyond competence. While it partly may be to reflect the linguistic background of most of his characters, such as Eeben, Pa, Ma, Sergeant Muller and so on, it also seems expressive of South Africa's drive to achieve unity in diversity. This is well-illustrated in the metaphor of the country's Rugby team to which Eeben alluded above.

In spite of there being many teams, there is the recognition by the players and their compatriots that unity is strength. Botha may well be deploying the same principle and conviction in a metaphorical sense in this context. In other words, a representation of linguistic diversity in the fiction may well be an attempt to forge social togetherness. Clearly, it is not merely borne of cultural difference or merely aimed at inscribing cultural difference.

Similarly, Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* and *Quiet Violence* are replete with some interesting linguistic strategies. Both novels' emergence from a polyglossic culture is also made obvious by the use of code-switching and un-translated words. An interesting aspect of this technique is the novelist's frequent switch between English and Afrikaans. Himself a Black Sotho, Duiker's facility with Afrikaans points to the bilingual, multilingual or the linguistic melange that has come to pervade the cultural space in South Africa; and, which appears to be asserting its presence on the country's literary territory. Duiker's extensive use of un-translated words and code-switching may also appear deliberate to contextualize and underpin his characters' linguistic background since most of the Afrikaans texts in the novels are attributed to characters of Afrikaans' background. This is significant for some reasons. Firstly, it underscores the linguistic plurality of the society in which the stories are set. Secondly, it marks a radical departure from what South African literature has been known for. Here, we have a Black writer confidently using the erstwhile passionately hated hegemonic language, Afrikaans. Thirdly, it is a celebration of hybridity which has come to be associated with postcolonial culture. Finally, and most importantly, it speaks of incipient rapprochement between hitherto adversarial codes in the country.

Prior to the liberalization of the political and cultural spaces in the 1990s in South Africa, it was a rarity to find this kind of linguistic features or experimentation in Black writing. Some examples of un-translated words in *Thirteen Cents* include *gemors, skollies, breyani, lytie* and so on while *The Quiet Violence* parades such words as *vasbyt, wena, batlang, bona, voerstek, eina* and so on. While the use of these words is metonymic of cultural diversity, it also asserts the presence and the significance of the culture they signify. Unfortunately, some of the words also inhibit the apprehension of meaning in some cases. This effort at apprehending meaning is sadly made worse by the use of un-translated clauses and sentences in code-switching contexts, especially in *Thirteen Cents.* During one of Azure's sex-work experience, Richard, one of his clients, tells him, '*Tsek jou naai! Jy dink jy's mos'n kleurling, ne? Suig Suig'* (*Thirteen Cents,* 53). What exactly is meant here can only be known by a reader who understands or speaks Afrikaans. The little other readers may infer is that the earlier part of the text is a question, as the punctuation mark '?' suggests. The reader can only guess that it has something to do with sexual request, as the context also suggests. Numerous other examples abound in the short novel. Consider a few more: 'You can't hide anything from me, *meisietje. Daai glad hare*' (*Thirteen Cents,* 14); *'Jy's awright nou. Ek is ook van daai kaut. Daai Vaalie mense, ek verstaan hulle nie' (Thirteen Cents, 26); 'Dankie vir die kos, Auntie, ek was baie honger.*

Where's Auntie Bertha?' (*Thirteen Cents,* 11). Although the contexts of the texts may be used in the process of meaning apprehension, little or no understanding of texts like these and others is likely to be achieved. In a way, this situation becomes a kind of metaphor for the misunderstanding subsisting between the centre and the margin in postcolonial reality. However, the prevalence of this representation can also be seen as a signifier of deliberate attempts at forging unity through linguistic plurality.

In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams,* two instances of glossing are noted in the novelist's presentation of poems by N.P. van Wyk Louw and C. Louis Leipold. Let us cite one for the sake of illustration:

> Dis vred, man, die oorlog is verby!
> Hoor jy die mense skreeu die state vol!
> Sien jy die hele werld is op hol?
> Kom, hier's 'n bottle soetwyn; laat ons drink!
> Ons nasie, wat so wild was, is nou mak……
> Die beste wat ons nasie het - die vrou!
>
> It's peace now, man, at last the war is over!
> Why, can't you hear those screeches wild and glad?
> And can't you see the whole world going mad?
> Come, here's a fug of wine; let's have a spree!
> Our nation that was wild and free is ripe……
> Of all that's best: Woman! Our nation's treasure!
>
> (*The Quiet Violence of Dreams,* 355)

Extracts from the poems of these writers are initially presented in Afrikaans and immediately followed by their equivalent translations in English as presented above. This incorporation of borrowed verse into a prose narrative foregrounds an enrichment of the stylistic innovations in the post-apartheid black South African fiction. To the extent that either could have been dispensed with, this intertextual appropriation signifies a stylistic strategy that is unlikely to be to be connected to the idea of cultural difference or ethnic identity. It seems more like a strategy to bring different languages together as a way of inscribing their inseparable coexistence and, by implication, of their speakers. This finds a support in the celebratory and fellowship mood suffusing the poetic lines.

In *The Quiet Violence of Dreams,* there is also multiplicity of linguistic medium as there are of plot, setting, narrator and innumerable characters. The novel breaks new ground by employing what Munro (2007:762) describes as 'multiple lingos' and identifies as including rasta-talk, tsotsi – taal (street talk,), Sotho and English. In addition to these, there is also the use of Afrikaans and French.

Like we have noted with respect to language use in *Thirteen Cents*, the use of multiple languages in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is not aimed at illustrating the linguistic background, cultural difference or social status of the characters, it is indeed the novelist's strategy to inscribe the imperative and reality of the coexistence of different languages and their speakers. Pluralism in language use, as seen here, may therefore also be seen as an inscription of hybridity as well as unity.

A consideration of some of the examples of these 'multiple lingos' is pertinent. In an interaction between Mmabatho, the protagonist's most reliable friend, and Madame Spiers, the hostess at a Mexican restaurant, the hostess asks, 'Alors, what's wrong with les amourex ce soir?' (65). Later on, she observes: 'You are very fiery when you get upset, I think that's why men find you *tres charmante cherie'* (65). There are several examples of this kind of English – French code-switching in the novel. Similarly, there is code-switching between English and Afrikaans in the conversation between Tshepo, the protagonist, and his roommate, Chris, in the following: 'Ja, that woman friend of yours, she gave you *korobela, sy het jou lekker geslaat'* (173). In Chris and Tshepo's encounter with some policemen, Chris protests, 'You can't just stop us for nothing and search us. *Ek het niks verkeerd gedoen nie*. This is unconstitutional! One of the policemen also replies, 'Constitution. Constitution *se moer. Julle daggamannetjies dink julle is slim, ne? fok julle'* (183). In conversations between Tshepo and Mmabatho, they occasionally switch between English and Sotho. For instance, Mmabatho once tells Tshepo, 'That's weak. *O batla ho re kereng'* (9). On another occasion, Tshepo tells Mmabatho, 'Ja, well, *ha re tshwane kaofela*. I don't like talking about things like that' (74). The fact that all the characters above share the same social status and have the ability to speak English confirms the view that the use of code-switching in the text is underpinned by the novelist's inclination to forge unity among the people through linguistic medium.

It is in the rasta lingo, which derives from the Jamaican creole, that we have the most sustained abrogation and appropriation of English, a language of the centre, to express a culture of the margin in *The Quiet Violence of Dreams.* Consider the following response to Tshepo's request for more information about rastas by a Rastafarian:

> Yes, Papa, I sight dat you have de theist for knowings. I'n I must always ask. Dat is de only way dat I'n I knows. Now you sight a rasta man is like onion. A rasta man grows from de east. Everything he learns is from de eart. I'n I learns to love de eart, to respek her. He is de roots of de people, de originalman. He knows stories, things about people, he come long time before anyone. He most alone by himself. A true rasta man live on de inskirts and watches and listens and remember everything about people… A rasta man knows man 'n man better than man 'n man tink and he knows man 'n man story, where de peoples come from (186).

The lengthy text above speaks a lot about the place or status of language, especially the imperial language, in the post-colony. First of all, the rasta lingo as used in the novel is a signifier of a sub-culture, drawing attention to and emphasizing its distinction. Secondly, when Tshepo addresses the speaking Rastafarian, he uses imperial English. This choice, wittingly or unwittingly, inscribes class difference between the two parties, an inheritance from the imperial order that institutionalized social hierarchy through language during its hey-days. The hierarchy is hereby retained through language. In fact, Tshepo's comments, earlier on in the novel, about the condition and lifestyle of Rastafarians lend credence to his own middle class and their own proletariat statuses, to use a Marxist cliche. Again, the language of the extract clearly shows phonological, syntactical and morphological variations from the metropole English.

Nevertheless, the Rastafarian English seen here is able to 'bear the burden' of the peculiar experiences of the Rastafarians, which the English of the centre seems incapable of bearing. Thus, Duiker's epic novel evinces an aspect of tension between the centre and the margin in postcolonial studies. This case, rather than support earlier arguments, clearly highlights the potential for discord in linguistic diversity. Nothing espouses this better than the fact that Tshepo and Chris, together with the Rastafarians, end up with dissonant perceptions of each other. However, while this instance calls to question earlier arguments, the possibility of reading the deployment of the foregoing linguistic features in the selected works as metonymic of drive for socio-cultural unity is not in doubt.

Conclusion

As noted earlier, language featured prominently in the hegemonic onslaught of apartheid as well as in the resistance the system incited. Similarly, it is noted that the language issue in post-apartheid South Africa is such a serious one that it enjoys the state's interest. The South African government has established a commission to handle issues relating to the development of all languages in the country. In fact, as far back as the period of negotiating the transition to multiracial democracy and a new constitution for the country, eleven languages had been recognized and proposed for adoption as official languages. In the literary sub-space of the South African nation, this political recognition appears to have catalyzed a new text-linguistic representation in the emergent post-apartheid fiction. Either as an unwitting reflection of the linguistic reality on the social landscape of the country or as a stylistic deployment by the novelists, the use of what Munro describes as 'multiple lingo' with respect to Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* is not an isolated case in post-apartheid fiction. Neither is it exclusive to writers of a particular racial background.

Although the use of multiple codes is not a new thing in postcolonial writing, it has almost always been employed to socially signify class distinction or ethnic identity; and, ideologically, to signify linguistic alienation, linguistic marginalization, cultural difference and allied issues. In the works examined here, this is clearly not always the case. In fact, in numerous cases, it appears motivated solely by the need to inscribe the characters' polyglossic capacity as well as cross-cultural understanding and fraternity.

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